



Udall Scholarship Application Guide

This application guide is provided by [FWD: Scholars](#) (FWD:S). FWD:S is a volunteer-led organization that seeks to pay forward our knowledge about competitive scholarship experiences. We aim to empower our peers through resources and support to pursue their academic and professional goals. Our ultimate aim is to better reflect the underrepresented identities among us.

To meet these goals, we work to increase the availability of scholarship application resources and match applicants to recent scholarship recipients for mentorship. We recognize that privilege of all kinds must be acknowledged and used to create a more equal and just world.

The FWD:S team is made up of students and alumni recipients of competitive scholarships—many of whom come from underrepresented backgrounds themselves—who are all eager to provide resources and support to prospective applicants. We want to use our privilege and insight to help students to chase their dreams at the undergraduate and graduate levels, both domestically and internationally.

Interested in mentorship? If you'd like to be paired with an alum of this scholarship to support your application process, fill out our [mentorship matching survey](#).

Interested in volunteering with us? If you'd like to help us support prospective applicants, take our [volunteer survey](#).

Partnerships: FWD:S is eager to form mutually beneficial relationships with organizations and individuals who share our commitment to diversifying higher education. If you're interested in partnering with FWD:S, please contact us at fwdscholars@gmail.com.

Have questions about FWD:S and its services? Send us an email at fwdscholars@gmail.com. You can also follow FWD:S on social media for updates on our program and more scholarship tips, tricks, and guides:

- [@fwd_scholars on Instagram](#)
- [@FWDscholars on Twitter](#)
- [FWD: Scholars on LinkedIn](#)
- www.fwdscholars.org

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MESSAGE FROM THE GUIDE CREATORS

Hey there! We are a group of alumni and current scholars who want to help you apply for the Udall Scholarship. This guide is intended to help inform you about the Udall application process, from the perspective of those who have been through it. We're so excited you're considering applying - and we're rooting for you!

DISCLAIMER

We think the perspectives of students that have actually been through the application process are far too often left out of resources offered to scholarship applicants. However, because this guide is from the perspective of current scholars/alumni, it provides only a partial view of the application process. It's important to keep in mind that these were our experiences and the suggestions that we found helpful, but they are not universal truths about how the program selects scholars. Also, while we do our best to keep this guide current, we can't guarantee that everything remains 100% accurate - please check the Udall website or reach out to the program staff if you have questions.

ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP

Description of the Foundation

"The Udall Foundation, a federal agency, works to both strengthen the appreciation and stewardship of the environment, public lands, and natural resources and strengthen Native Nations to facilitate their self-determination, governance, and human capital goals." - from the Udall Scholars [website](#)

The Udall Foundation was created in 1992 to celebrate Morris K. Udall's impact and service in these fields, and was updated in 2009 to similarly honor Stewart L. Udall. It awards scholarships, fellowships, and internships for study in fields related to those stated above. More information about the Foundation can be found on the Scholarship website [About Us page](#).

While the Undergraduate Scholarship is one of their programs, they also have many others, which you can find on their [Programs page](#) if you're interested in learning more.

"If you're selected as a Udall scholar and get to attend the scholar orientation, you will meet several members of the Foundation, including Board members, Staff, etc. (perhaps even Sen. Tom Udall!) You'll immediately see their genuine passion for these issues and their deep investment in advocacy. Seeing this large community that has influenced everything from school programs

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all the way to the federal government is honestly awe-inspiring and helps keep you motivated to continue your work!" - from a 2018 scholar

Description of Scholarship

The Udall Scholarship provides:

- Access to the Udall [Alumni Network](#): an association of change-makers, working in Indian country and environmental fields, sharing innovative ideas, professional advice, and job and internship opportunities.
- Five days in Tucson, Arizona, at [Scholar Orientation](#): extending your professional network, meeting other scholars and alumni, and learning new skills.
- Up to \$7,000 for eligible academic expenses. (See [FAQs](#) for scholarship award benefits and conditions.)

The Udall Scholarships have 3 categories: [Tribal Policy](#), [Native Health Care](#), and [Environment](#). Each has slightly different requirements. At present, this guide will focus on the Environment category but some of the information is applicable across Tribal Policy and Native Health Care as well.

The Environmental Udall Scholarship is for:

- College sophomores or juniors
- People interested in conservation, environmental stewardship, or environmental policy
- With demonstrated commitment to the environment through participation in campus activities or service to your community
- Who are working towards a career that will enable you to address environmental issues on a local, national, or global scale

The Native Health Care Scholarship is for:

- Eligibility
 - You are enrolled in a state or federally recognized tribe or band;
 - One or more of your parents or grandparents was an enrolled member of a state or federally recognized tribe or band
 - You are a permanent U.S. resident or U.S. citizen who is a member of the First Nations of Canada.
- College student currently in your sophomore or junior year
- You are interested in improving health care practice and delivery in Indian country, or contributing to health care policy and research
- You have demonstrated your commitment to Indian country through participation in cultural activities and service to your community
- You are working towards a career that will enable you to impact health care for your tribe or for Native Americans and Alaska Natives

The Tribal Policy Scholarship is for:

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- Eligibility
 - You are enrolled in a state or federally recognized tribe or band;
 - One or more of your parents or grandparents was an enrolled member of a state or federally recognized tribe or band
 - You are a permanent U.S. resident or U.S. citizen who is a member of the First Nations of Canada.
- You are a college student currently in your sophomore or junior year
- You have demonstrated your commitment to Indian country through participation in cultural activities and service to your community
- You are working towards a career that will enable you to make a difference for your tribe or for Native Americans and Alaska Natives

APPLYING FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP

What the Udall Scholarship Covers

- Up to \$7,000 for eligible academic expenses - typically tuition, fees, books and supplies, and room and board. This would usually go toward your junior (if you apply as a sophomore) or senior (if you apply as a junior) year of undergraduate study. With additional documentation you may be able to apply the scholarship to an institution other than your home university. See the [FAQs page](#) on the Udall website for up to date information.
- All expenses covered for travel to and housing and food during the 5-day Scholar Orientation in Tuscon, Arizona. The Orientation is an opportunity to meet Scholars in your class and alumni, as well as leaders in the field. This is a non-negotiable, mandatory component of the Scholarship.
- Access to the extensive Udall Alumni Network - a widespread network of change-makers. This includes an active Alumni social media presence and email list-serve full of job listings.

Application Timeline

- The final application deadline is typically in early March, but **many universities will have internal deadlines well before then**. It's a good idea to get started over winter break (or even before) since some of the essays will take a while to write.
- All applicants must be nominated by their undergraduate university. If you don't have a representative at your institution already, a faculty member can become one, see [here](#) for more details.
- **Check with your undergraduate institution for their internal deadlines.** For example, the initial deadline for my application to my university was January 26. Depending on the interest in applying for the scholarship, your undergraduate institution may have internal

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interviews (though there is no interview for the actual national application). You can contact one of the volunteers listed below for interview advice.

- You'll need 3 letters of recommendation. At least 2 of them should be familiar with your work and leadership experiences on and off campus. Your academic record will speak for itself - try to get recommenders who will round you out as a person. Meet with professors beforehand if you're not sure about the quality of their letter, or to discuss potential specific examples they could include.
- There are no rolling admissions since the Foundation reviews all applications at once in April, so there's no benefit in submitting early except to avoid potential website crashes the day of.
- There are no hard cutoff standards for this scholarship. Particularly, the Udall does not have an age cutoff and encourages mature students to apply.
- Example timeline:
 - September: Look into your institution's nomination process and identify internal deadlines. Also identify potential recommenders
 - December: Request your recommendation letters.
 - Over winter break: Look through [the Udall Papers](#), the collected writings of Mo and Stewart Udall. Identify 3 pieces with connections to your advocacy. Draft a response to each: What surprises you? What prior experiences and studies do you draw from as you interpret and evaluate these? How do these influence your views on how you want to pursue advocacy in these fields? Do more than summarize their positions.
 - January: Complete your first draft of the application - share with friends or mentors, solicit feedback
 - Jan/Feb: Campus interviews (if applicable), internal nomination process, application revisions.
 - March: Final application deadline (submitted by your institution)
 - April: Notification of results
 - August: Scholar Orientation in Arizona

General Application Advice

- As noted before, the scholarship is for students dedicated to issues related to the environment, tribal policy, or tribal healthcare. Note that you don't have to be interested in more than one of these, but definitely emphasize any experiences you have that might cross boundaries.
- Most of the application is straightforward and asks you about past experiences and future plans. Always relate past experiences back to the theme of the scholarship, emphasizing the broader implications of your work, whether it's conservation, environmental justice, or something else. Be clear about your future plans, even if you're unsure or are worried your plans may change - you will not be held to this plan! The

purpose is to show that you have reflected on how you want to contribute to positive change, individually and as part of a collective.

- There's an "optional" essay at the end - you are highly encouraged to write something here. It could be anything that's not covered in the application itself - well-rounded candidates will have something to cover.
 - For example, I wrote about my relationship with my father who immigrated from India to work at an oil and gas company, and reconciling my belief in a clean energy future with my respect for him and his sacrifices. - From a 2018 scholar
- The unique part of the application is the response essay about a speech/article from Morris or Stewart Udall. They'll provide a link to a repository to all of the relevant speeches. Spend time combing through these - you don't have to read all of them in detail, but do try to find one that connects directly to your interests. There are a lot of them and they discuss a variety of topics at length, so it shouldn't be difficult to find something relevant to your interests.
 - For example, I found an article by Stewart Udall where he discusses the future of transportation and the development of minicars with high fuel efficiency - turns out I was working on high-efficiency electric vehicles and could tie this article in directly with my research. - From a 2018 scholar
- The Udall Foundation offers their own advice and guidance [here](#).

Advice from Underrepresented Udall Scholars

- Apply as a sophomore. You may not have acquired the service opportunities, experiences, or know what your passions are yet, but this gives you the opportunity to practice applying. The process is just as important as the outcome. I became an honorable mention the first time I applied, I was a bit disappointed, but it also motivated me to apply for other opportunities and internships that year so I could write about those experiences the next year I applied for Udall. That year as an honorable mention, I acquired many experiences that were related to the field I wanted to pursue which ultimately strengthened my application and myself as a candidate for other scholarships and fellowships.
- Ask for help. My director of scholarships and fellowships at the University of New Mexico was the person who encouraged and motivated me. She made me go into her office every week for about an hour to sit and dedicate time to write and revise my essays. I needed that discipline. I also could tell the difference in quality of writing because I spread out the work instead of trying to complete the whole application right before the deadline.
- Don't procrastinate. Yes, it is a long application with many pieces. There are also multiple deadlines that you need to meet. It is all worth it, when you overcome and get accepted to move onto the next portion of the process.
- Personalize your application. As a Native Healthcare Scholar, I related my personal experiences with the field I wanted to work in. My cohort recognized the disparities of underrepresented scholars there were and we made it known that we needed to diversify the cohorts themselves. This is directly related to the environment, policy, and healthcare

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fields. They lack the representation that we need. It starts by becoming a Udall scholar and pursuing your goals to change the representation of the field you want to pursue.

- Dream big and set your goals high! When writing about your career aspirations don't be scared to say your goal is to be in the highest position in the country. Udall wants ambitious and motivated students who are going to make a big difference in their communities and fields. Make it seem as if you are the most confident person on paper while remaining humble enough that you know you can't accomplish this work by yourself.
- When I worked on my Udall application, I applied as a sophomore and was nominated but did not become a finalist or recipient. I applied again as a Junior with the same GPA and I wrote about my experiences much differently than I had been advised to the previous year. The representatives did not want to work with me because I was much different from the other applicants and they did not know how to relate my experiences to the scholarship. What I learned from this is that there will be people who work with you and who help you to achieve your goals and there will be other people represented in your institution that are there to help applicants who they identify with. Applicants need to find mentors and faculty help outside of the designated "representative" when they are underrepresented because there is better help in people who have achieved a lot in your shoes than those who want the designation of "representative."
- ...I always tell my friends that we need to apply because they need to see that we are here whether or not they want us to be here. My advice is never let yourself write something that could be written by someone with more privilege than you - if you have a narrative, put it in the application and make it relevant. Telling about the difficult experiences that power you in life separates you from those who did not struggle with feeding their family, make sacrifices just to get through college, or hide parts of their identity to stay safe.

CONNECT WITH FORMER SCHOLARS

Have questions about the Udall Scholarship in general? Fill out the survey on [this page](#) of the FWD:S website, and we can try to connect you with a current scholar or alum who can answer them!

Have questions about the specific contents of this document? Reach out to us at fwdscholars@gmail.com.

Have questions about FWD:S and its services? Send us an email at fwdscholars@gmail.com. You can also follow FWD:S on social media for updates on our program and for more scholarship tips, tricks, and guides:

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